

After a rest of half an hour, the march resumed\* The gorge, which would about ever more and more, and now measured ten to twelve feet across, was carpeted with a sandy soil, scattered with pebbles, and without a sign of vegetation. It seemed as though the summit must be an arid waste, for otherwise some seed or germ would have been carried down by the rain and would have sprouted. But there was nothing here—not even a patch of lichen or moss.

About two o'clock in the afternoon another halt was called for rest and refreshment. They all sat down in a kind of clearing where the walls widened out like a bell, and over which the sun was passing on its downward way to the west. The height now attained was estimated at seven or eight hundred feet, which justified the hope of reaching the upper plateau.

At three o'clock the journey was resumed. The difficulties became momentarily greater. The slope was very steep, the ground strewn with landslips which made climbing hard, and there were large stones which slipped and bounded down. The gorge, which had widened out considerably,

now formed a ravine, with sides still  
rising two or  
three hundred feet in height. They  
had to help  
one another, and pull each other up by  
the arms\*  
Everything pointed to the possibility of  
reaching  
the plateau now. And the albatross  
spread<sup>7</sup> o<sup>^</sup>t its